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News Releases

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USDA RELEASES COST OF FOOD AT HOME FOR JULY

WASHINGTON, Aug. 29—Here is the U.S. Department of Agriculture's monthly update of the weekly cost of food at home for July 1983:

	Plans			
	Thrifty	Low-cost	Moderate-cost	Liberal
Families:				
Family of 2 (20-50 years)	$35.30	$44.40	$54.80	$67.30
Family of 2 (51 years and over)	33.50	42.60	52.30	62.10
Family of 4 with preschool children	51.40	63.90	77.90	94.90
Family of 4 with elementary school children	59.00	75.10	93.80	112.50
Individuals in four-person families:				
Children:				
1-2 years	9.30	11.20	13.00	15.60
3-5 years	10.00	12.30	15.10	18.10
6-8 years	12.30	16.20	20.30	23.80
9-11 years	14.60	18.50	23.70	27.50
Females:				
12-19 years	15.30	18.20	22.00	26.50
20-50 years	15.20	18.90	22.90	29.00
51 and over	15.10	18.30	22.50	26.70
Males:				
12-14 years	15.30	21.00	26.20	30.70
15-19 years	15.90	21.80	26.90	31.20
20-50 years	16.90	21.50	26.90	32.20
51 and over	15.40	20.40	25.00	29.80

USDA's Human Nutrition Information Service computes the cost of food at home for four food plans—thrifty, low-cost, moderate-cost and liberal.

Isabel Wolf, administrator of the Human Nutrition Information Service, said the plans consist of foods that provide well-balanced meals and snacks for a week.

USDA assumes all food is bought at the store and prepared at home. Costs do not include alcoholic beverages, pet food, soap, cigarettes, paper goods and other nonfood items bought at the store.

"USDA costs are only guides to spending," Wolf said. "Families may spend more or less, depending on such factors as where they buy their food, how carefully they plan and buy, whether some food is produced at home, what foods the family likes and how much food is prepared at home.

"Most families will find the moderate-cost or low-cost plan suitable," she said. "The thrifty plan, which USDA uses to set the coupon allotment in the food stamp program, is for other families who have tighter budgets. Families with unlimited resources might use the liberal plan."

To use the chart to estimate your family's food costs:

— For members eating all meals at home—or carried from home—use the amounts shown in the chart.

— For members eating some meals out, deduct 5 percent from the amount shown for each meal not eaten at home. Thus, for a person eating lunch out five days a week, subtract 25 percent, or one-fourth the cost shown.

— For guests, add 5 percent of the amount shown for the proper age group for each meal.

Costs in the second part of the chart are for individuals in four-person families. If your family has more or less than four, total the "individual" figures and make these adjustments, because larger families tend to buy and use food more economically than smaller ones:

— For a one-person family, add 20 percent.

— For a two-person family, add 10 percent.

— For a three-person family, add 5 percent.
— For a family of five or six persons, subtract 5 percent.
— For a family of seven or more, subtract 10 percent.

Details of the four family food plans are available from the Consumer Nutrition Division, Human Nutrition Information Serice, USDA, Federal Building, Hyattsville, Md. 20782.

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USDA FAILS TO GET ENOUGH COTTON FOR PIK; ASKS FARMERS TO "HARVEST FOR PIK"

WASHINGTON, Aug. 31—A special U.S. Department of Agriculture purchase program for cotton did not return enough cotton to USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation to meet payment-in-kind obligations, said Daniel Amstutz, under secretary of agriculture for international affairs and commodity programs.

Thus, all producers who are eligible to receive PIK cotton from CCC inventory must "Harvest for PIK"—obtain loans on their 1983 production to satisfy 40 percent of their PIK needs. The other 60 percent will come from cotton already in CCC's inventory, Amstutz said..

Under the Supplemental Appropriation Act for fiscal year 1983 (PL 98-63), USDA had to accept bids of up to 20 percent on 1982-crop cotton, unless USDA could buy enough cotton to fulfill PIK requirements at lower bids. The 1980 and 1981-crop bids were evaluated on the basis of comparative equity values of the 1982 crop.

Under the special purchase program, CCC acquired an estimated 780,000 bales of cotton, which when added to CCC's present inventory, is not enough to meet CCC's needs for the PIK program.

During the Aug. 8-24 purchase program, CCC accepted bids on 1980, 1981, and 1982-crop cotton from farmers who had cotton pledged as collateral for outstanding price support loans. Farmers received in-kind compensation for selling cotton to CCC.

Bids were offered on 1,177,901 bales. The bids ranged from zero to 100 percent. Farmers offered bids on 1,011,109 bales of 1982-crop

cotton, 151,377 bales of 1981-crop cotton and 15,415 bales of 1980-crop cotton.

CCC accepted these bid offers:

Cotton	Bids accepted	Bids offered	In-kind compensation to farmers in bales	Net bales to CCC
1982-crop	0 thru 20 percent	907,701	166,164	741,537
1981-crop	0 thru 14 percent	39,597	3,933	35,664
1980-crop	0 thru 7 percent	2,662	168	2,494
Total			170,265	779,695

USDA permitted farmers to reoffer 1982-crop cotton accepted under the bid program held in May and June. The 417,300 net bales of cotton acquired under that program are included in the 741,537 net bales of 1982-crop acquired under the special purchase program. The maximum bid offers accepted under the previous purchase program was 7 percent.

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USDA TO OFFER NONRECOURSE SUGAR LOAN PROGRAM

WASHINGTON, Aug. 31—Secretary of Agriculture John Block has determined that the price of the 1983 crop of domestically grown sugarcane will be supported through a nonrecourse loan program at the national average loan rate of 17.5 cents per pound for raw cane sugar. This price support level is the minimum statutory level prescribed by the Agricultural Act of 1949.

Block also has determined that the price of the 1983 crop of domestically grown sugar beets will be supported under the loan

program at a national average loan rate of 20.86 cents per pound for refined beet sugar.

Other terms and conditions of the program will be announced later in the Federal Register.

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USDA ISSUES NEW RULE TO HELP PREVENT INTERSTATE SPREAD OF GYPSY MOTH

WASHINGTON, Aug. 31—The U.S. Department of Agriculture will begin regulating the movement of outdoor household articles Oct. 3 to help prevent the interstate spread of the gypsy moth.

"All items used or stored outdoors must be free of gypsy moths—eggs, caterpillars, cocoons and adults—before they can be moved from a gpysy moth high-risk area into or through a non-regulated area," said Bert Hawkins, administrator of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. The high-risk area is generally the infested northeastern states.

"People who have lived with this pest know what a nuisance it can be," Hawkins said. "We're counting on their cooperation to keep the gypsy moth from spreading to new neighborhoods.

"After Oct. 3 when the new regulation goes into effect, people moving from the high risk area will have to inspect their outdoor household articles before they move, or hire a USDA-trained commercial expert to do it for them," said Hawkins.

State and federal agricultural officials will be checking interstate moves in transit or at destination to make sure they are gypsy moth-free. Every move should be accompanied by either an outdoor household article document issued by a USDA-qualified expert or a written statement that the owner inspected the articles, Hawkins said.

Most new isolated infestations are started from gypsy moth egg masses on household articles used or stored outdoors during the gypsy moth's egg-laying stage. Each tan-colored, fuzzy egg mass can contain as many as 1,000 eggs—capable of over-wintering to hatch and start a new infestation of the leaf-eating gypsy moth.

Under the new regulation, people may be fined if they move any life form of the gypsy moth—adult, caterpillar, cocoon or egg mass—out of designated high-risk areas, unless their articles are accompanied by an outdoor household document obtained before the move.

Names of qualified, certified applicators are available from state departments of agriculture, county extension agents or USDA plant protection and quarantine offices.

Inspection guidelines for those who elect to inspect their own articles are available by writing: Don't Move Gypsy Moth, USDA-APHIS, Rm. G-187, 6505 Belcrest Rd., Hyattsville, Md. 20782. Copies may also be available at local public libraries, state departments of agriculture, county extension agents or USDA plant protection and quarantine offices.

Regulated items include anything associated with the household kept outside the home. General categories include: recreation or camping items, building materials, yard and garden items and children's toys.

High-risk states are: Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey and Rhode Island. Parts of these states are also high-risk: Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, New Hampshire, New York, Pennsylvania and Vermont.

The regulation is scheduled to be published in the Sept. 1 Federal Register.

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CCC ANNOUNCES SEPTEMBER LOAN INTEREST RATE OF 10-1/2 PERCENT

WASHINGTON, Sept. 1—Commodity farm storage loans disbursed in September by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation will carry a 10-1/2 percent interest rate, according to CCC Vice President C. Hoke Leggett.

The new rate, up from 10 percent, reflects the interest rate charged by the U.S. Treasury in September, Leggett said.

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SWINE DISEASE PROJECT MARKS PROGRESS IN IOWA, ILLINOIS

WASHINGTON, Sept. 1—Pilot projects to eradicate pseudorabies in swine in Pike and Macoupin Counties, Ill., and in Marshall County, Iowa, are making significant early progress, U.S. Department of Agriculture veterinarians said today.

Dr. L. W. Schnurrenberger, a staff veterinarian with USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, said in Pike County, Ill., the cooperative state-federal-industry program appears to have eliminated pseudorabies from three previously infected herds in Detroit Township. Veterinarians are developing cleanup plans for six other infected herds that have been located to date.

"We are encouraged that these first three herds continue to remain negative after we have removed the infected animals and have twice tested the remaining swine," Schnurrenberger said.

The pilot projects in Pike and Macoupin Counties, Ill., and Marshall County, Iowa, are planned to run for three years.

"On the whole, we've made excellent progress in spite of the heat, which limits the time we have for testing swine herds," Schnurrenberger said.

Dr. James Christy, USDA veterinarian-in-charge in Illinois, said the federal-state testing crews have found a higher precentage of infected herds than expected—25 percent. However, the incidence of infection within the herds has been lower—only about 6 percent of some 1,100 animals tested.

"We're getting excellent cooperation from swine producers all the way down the line," Christy said. "The project offers a means of eliminating the swine disease that restricts production and increases costs."

In Iowa, USDA Veterinarian-in-charge Phil Pickerill said the project has found only five infected herds out of the 57 tested since the pilot project started in early July.

"This is fewer infected herds than we originally expected," Pickerill said.

Pickerill said the veterinary practitioners in Marshall County had made "excellent" progress. The 57 herds tested represent slightly more than one-fifth of 250 herds located within the project area.

The Marshall County project differs from the one in Illinois in that vaccination is being used as a tool in developing individual cleanup plans for infected herds. As the project began later—to comply with Iowa public review procedures—it is still in the initial testing phase.

Pseudorabies, also known as Aujeszky's disease or "mad itch," is a virus disease that is highly fatal to newborn pigs. It can be transmitted to most other warmblooded animals except humans. Swine are the natural host and, once infected, can become carriers of the disease and shed the virus when they become stressed.

Vaccines help minimize losses from the disease, but they may not prevent infection; and currently, tests do not distinguish between vaccinated and infected swine.

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FISCAL 1984 MARKET STABILIZATION PRICE FOR SUGAR SET AT 21.17 CENTS

WASHINGTON, Sept. 1—Under Secretary of Agriculture Daniel Amstutz today announced an initial market stabilization price for sugar of 21.17 cents per pound for fiscal 1984, up less than one-half cent from the previous level. The previous market stabilization price, in effect since Oct. 1, 1982, was 20.73 cents per pound.

The market stabilization price, based on the domestic sugar price support level plus marketing factors, is used to determine the necessary level of import fees authorized under Section 22 of the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933. It represents the price at which producers would be more likely to sell their sugar in the marketplace than to forfeit it to USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation.

The new market stabilization price reflects the price support loan rate of 17.50 cents per pound, transportation of 2.62 cents, interest costs of 0.85 cent and an incentive factor of 0.2 cent per pound to encourage producers to sell in the market.

Currently, there is no import fee on raw sugar and a 1-cent fee for refined sugar. New fees, which will become applicable on Oct. 1, will be announced by Sept. 25, based on the market stabilization price announced today, Amstutz said.

Amstutz reaffirmed the administration's intention to revert to a duty and fee-based system for sugar imports as soon as market conditions permit. He said current and projected conditions in the world market indicate a need for continuation of import quotas, and that there will be quarterly reviews of market conditions and the market stabilization price.

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USDA CHANGES FIRE ANT REGULATED AREAS IN FOUR STATES

WASHINGTON, Sept. 2—Areas regulated to prevent spread of the imported fire ant in Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi and South Carolina are being changed, according to U.S. Department of Agriculture officials.

"As a result of changing pest conditions, we are putting additional areas in Alabama, Georgia and Mississippi under regulation; expanding areas designated generally infested in Alabama, Mississippi and South Carolina; and releasing an area in Alabama from regulation," said Edward J. Stubbs, an official of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

The imported fire ant can inflict painful stings on people and animals, interfering with farming operations and other outdoor activities. Farm equipment may be damaged by the large mounds, Stubbs said.

"The USDA imported fire ant program supports state efforts to control the pest, through applications of insecticide and research to find new and better controls," he said.

Imported fire ant regulations restrict the movement of regulated articles from all or part of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Texas, to prevent artificial spread of the pest. Infested areas may be designated generally infested or suppressive; suppressive areas are those where efforts are underway to eradicate the imported fire ant.

Articles that are prohibited from leaving the regulated areas include soil (except commercially prepared packaged potting soil in original containers), plants with soil on the roots (except home-grown houseplants), sod, hay and straw (unless used for packing or bedding) and used mechanized soil-moving equipment (unless cleaned of loose soil).

Counties newly under regulation are: DeKalb and Madison in Alabama; Hall, Lincoln and Wilkes in Georgia; and Benton and Panola in Mississippi. Counties already partly regulated, in which regulated areas are being expanded, are: Lawrence and Marshall in Alabama; Alcorn, Sunflower and Tishomingo in Mississippi; and Aiken, Allendale, Barnwell, Marlboro and Newberry in South Carolina.

Limestone County, Alabama, has been released from imported fire ant regulations, following insecticide treatments and extensive surveys which have shown it to be free of the pest.

These changes are effective immediately upon publication in the Sept. 6 Federal Register. Comments may be sent until Nov. 7, to Thomas O. Gessel, Director, Regulatory Coordination Staff, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Room 728, Federal Building, Hyattsville, Md. 20782.

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RESERVE CORN REMAINS IN RELEASE STATUS

WASHINGTON, Sept. 2—Corn in all farmer-owned grain reserves will remain in release status through Sept. 30, a U.S. Department of Agriculture official said today.

C. Hoke Leggett, a vice president of USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation, said storage payments for reserve corn stopped Aug. 31 and will remain stopped through Sept. 30. Also, interest will be charged on all of the loans beginning Sept. 1.

Leggett said the decision on reserve corn was made following a review by CCC of the average market price on Sept. 1, as reported by USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, adjusted to reflect the market price received by farmers.

The adjusted price on Sept. 1 was $3.32 per bushel, well above the release levels for reserves IV and V of $3.15 and $3.25, respectively.

Data used by CCC include daily prices compiled by the Agricultural Marketing Service, as well as the month-end report of prices received by farmers issued by USDA's Statistical Reporting Service. This end-of-month report shows the previous month's average price and the current mid-month price.

Kansas City, Minneapolis, Omaha and St. Louis are the daily markets reviewed by CCC for corn.

As of Aug. 24, there were 1.9 billion bushels of corn in all farmer-owned grain reserves. Much of that reserve corn is not affected by the release since it had been designated for the payment-in-kind program before the market price reached the release level.

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